(c) whether any private operators have been shown any willingness to operate hovercraft or catamaran on this sector?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) A decision is yet to be taken in this regard.

(c) Yes, Sir. Union Government had cleared applications from four private parties for acquisition of vessels for operating passenger services between Bombay and Goa. Two of these sanctions for acquisition of two Catamaran vessels are still valid.

Use of Telecast Media to educate the rural masses

255. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state what steps have been taken by Government so far to use the telecast media to educate the rural masses in the country on the application of modern technologies in day-today- living?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): Doordarshan regularly telecasts for the benefit of rural audience programmes in different regional languages aimed at educating and informing them about the improved methods of agriculture and irrigation, health care and other aspects of daily life with a view to help them to improve their living conditions. These programmes are mounted to promote a more rational and scientific approach toward life, and to counter-act prevalent superstitions.

Assamese speaking Station Director in All India Radio and Doordarshan in Assam

256. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the stations of All India Radio and Doordarshan in Assam, there is no Assamese speaking Station Director;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the number of non-Bengali speaking Directors in the All India Radio and T.V. centres of West Bengal?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) to (c) The post of Station Director in All India Radio and Director in Doordarshan Kendra is a supervisory post and it is not considered necessary for the Station Director/Director to know the language of the area although the knowledge of the language does give some added advantage.

Proposal to make T.V. Serials on the great saint of Assam Shankradeva

257. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether some proposals to make T.V. serials on the great saint of Assam Sankaradeva, and one on the 42 movement in Assam are pending in the Department;

(b) if so, by when these proposals would be taken up by the doordarshan; and

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in negative what are the reasons therefor?